

Introduction

Contacts: Marina Office 01343 813066, VHF 12. This office is manned 0900 to 1600 weekdays only;

Lossiemouth is a crossroads for most of the cruising boats passing along this coast; the standard day hop route being Inverness, Lossie, Whitehills/Banff, Peterhead and South or vice versa. It provides excellent shelter and full marina type services although it can be touch and go entering in northerlies and the depths in the entrance can be prohibitive to deep keel boats two hours either side of Low Water.

The first harbour here was built at the beginning of the eighteenth century but it was never a real success. The local Elgin worthies hewed a replacement harbour from the rocks of Stotfield Head in the early nineteenth century which is the present day East basin. The expansion of the fishing fleet and the arrival of the railway necessitated a further expansion with the building of the West basin later in that century and that, the East & West basins is the harbour we have today.

You can find their harbour website at <http://www.lossiemouthmarina.com>

The dying fishing industry in the early to mid twentieth century and the subsequent closure of the railway branch line caused the harbour board to reassess their position and they were the first on this coast to realise the potential of the leisure market. In 1992 they put in pontoons in the East basin whilst continuing the commercial enterprise in the West basin. Eventually the fishing side of the harbour declined so far that they have now put pontoons in the West basin, most of which are occupied by yachts and private angling boats.

One thing which has kept the village, and arguably the town of Elgin, alive has been the presence of the airfield to the west of the town. This was laid out for the RAF during WWII and after that war became a Royal Naval Air Station (HMS Fulmar). In the 1970s the shrinking of the Royal Navy's Carrier fleet forced them to give up many of their airfields, this one included, but luckily for Lossiemouth and Elgin the RAF reassumed command of the airfield and now during your stay at the Marina you will be all too aware of the presence of the RAF Typhoons, especially if they have night flying whilst you are there. The populace here has been subjected to the noise of jet fighters and bombers since the days of the Vampire and Seahawk and seem not to notice it; you will not be so untroubled!! Other than the airfield and the harbour, the town has little in the way of industry; the once busy daily fish market closed in the early noughties and has now been developed as housing. Most of the locals go into Elgin for their supplies as there are very few large shops in the village.

When you peruse our "Facilities" and "Eating etc" sections you will begin to see why this place is popular as stopping place for the coastal cruiser.

Approach

Your approach from the east will be frustrating as Spey Bay seems to go on for ever!

You will be able to see the hills behind Elgin when you are abeam Buckie, do not lay a course towards them because they are miles inland from Lossie. By the time you are about halfway across the bay you will begin to see the flat, low lying peninsula appearing to the north of the prominent hills further inland. Basically, if you have put our waypoint into your GP, just continue towards that even though there doesn't appear to be anything there when you depart the Scar Nose point area!!

From the West you will need to keep nearly a mile off the shore to avoid the Covesea Skerries and the Hillman Skerries but once you have cleared the perch at the Eastern end of the Hillmans you can start to close with the town.

If there is a northerly set to the sea, give yourself plenty of time to clear up for harbour as, close in, there may be considerable swell which makes wandering around on the upper deck a bit iffy. Once you are inside the

harbour all your attention will be needed to get through the dog leg into the basins and thence to your berth; there is not much room to manoeuvre round the dog leg so it's a good idea to ask the marina office if there is anything outbound.

For years Lossiemouth has been dogged with silting both in the entrance and in the visitors' basin. They now, in 2018, have their own dredging equipment and are in the process of sorting out all the trouble spots. At the moment (2021) they have progressed well and, apart from LWS you should be able to get a 1.5 metre draft boat in 24/7. They have 1.2 + tide height in the entrance shelving in places to about 0.9 + tide height. They have dredged the sand bank that was in the visitors berths.

In 2023 it looks like the entrance is silting again, and they recommend:

Draughts of 1.8m or more – 2 hours either side of HW
Draughts of under 1.8m – 3 hours either side of the tide

Good seamanship will always dictate that if you are in any doubt whatsoever - call the Marina for advice on #12

Berthing

Berth as directed by the Marina Office on VHF 12.

You should expect to be berthed alongside the visitors pontoon attached the NE end of the Eastern basin. They will charge £25 for the first night with reductions for week stays. This harbour is not part of the Moray Rover card scheme.

If you arrive when the Marina Office is closed you can get a harbour pack and key from the blue box at the top of the access ramp or from the Steamboat pub at the South end of the East basin. It would be wise to contact them in advance if you know you are arriving out of hours.

Facilities

This is a fully serviced marina with water and shore power at every berth. Free Shore power and water is available on the visitors pontoon. There are toilets and showers at the western & southern extremities of their respective basins which are included in the berthing fee; the key to the marina gates no longer fits the ablutions; you will be given a code with the visitors pack. There are coin operated laundrette facilities in both toilet blocks. They now have Wifi throughout the marina.

Petrol & diesel are obtainable by can from the garage just across the road from the marina office and that garage also supplies refills for both Calor Gas and Camping Gas. For outboard motor problems there is Jimmy on 0798930148 and for any other problems contact Buccaneer in Macduff on 01261835199.

The Marina has lift out facilities and a covered workshop area.

Although you won't find a large supermarket there is a small Co-op and a very good butcher.

There is a regular bus service into Elgin where you can catch buses or trains feeding to the rest of UK

What To Do

There are three or four good restaurants in Lossie, The Harbour Lights, open daily from 8am until 4pm (good breakfast), La Caverna open 1100am until late and the Stotfield Hotel offers standard hotel fare. Up on the Queen Street you will find both a Chinese and an Indian take away as well as the ubiquitous fish and chip shop. At the western end of the town is the Beach Bar which is larger than its name implies and it offers good pub grub. There is a Lossiemouth Cruising Club which holds races and partakes in other regattas along the coast but it doesn't have its own clubhouse; their watering hole is the Steamboat Inn overlooking the East Basin.

History